



Central Intelligence Agency  
Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence

30 July 1982

NOTE FOR: DDCI  
DCI

SUBJECT: Attached memo on Status of  
Possible Aircraft Delivery  
to Nicaragua

I have alerted the briefers to keep Clark informed about ships. We probably will have a piece in the pubs tonite.

This memo was done to keep you informed.

25X1

Richard J. Kerr  
Acting DDI

SECRET

25X1

DDI- 16292-82

30 July 1982

## MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Status of Possible Aircraft Delivery to Nicaragua

1. For the past month we have been watching two Soviet merchant ships carrying MIG aircraft that we are concerned might be destined for Nicaragua. [REDACTED] 25X1

2. Soviet merchant ship "Mezhgore" left the Black Sea 27 June with two MIG-17 and three MIG-21 crates identified on deck. It arrived in Mariel, Cuba on 12 July, discharged its cargo, and has subsequently departed for the return voyage to the Soviet Union. [REDACTED] 25X1

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3. Past deliveries of Soviet aircraft to Cuba have been shipped by rail to San Antonio de los Banos Airfield for assembly or further transshipment. No MIG-17 or MIG-21 crates have been seen there since the arrival of the Mezhgore on 12 July. [REDACTED] 25X1

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4. A second Soviet merchant ship, "Metalurg Baikov", was identified loading MIG-17 aircraft crates at the Soviet Black Sea port of Nikolayev on 7 July. It passed through the Bosphorus with at least seven MIG-17 crates on deck, along with numerous trucks, electronic vans, and trailers. This ship went to Latikia, Syria, on 9 July and remained in port for one week. It then sailed to Mers El Kebir, Algeria, arriving between 20-22 July. [REDACTED] 25X1

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5. Mers El Kebir has been used at least twice in the past two years to ship Soviet military equipment to Nicaragua using Algerian ships. [REDACTED]

No 25X1

aircraft crates are visible, either on the ship or on the quay and transloading areas of the port. [REDACTED] 25X1

6. Although there is no hard evidence that a delivery is imminent, or even that MIG-17s have been brought as far as Cuba and Algeria, we believe there is a possibility that Nicaragua will receive a shipment of Soviet MIGs in the next several weeks. MIG-17s are the most likely, because they are roughly equivalent to the Super Mystere aircraft of the Honduran Air Force and would be easier for the Sandinistas to learn to fly than supersonic MIG-21s. Assembly of aircraft in Cuba for a fly-in, or delivery by a third country vessel are the most likely means. [REDACTED] report that Nicaragua has already received a shipment of MIGs from a Libyan freighter is probably not true as Libya has no ocean going merchant ships and [REDACTED] 25X1

[REDACTED] no evidence of the reported delivery. [REDACTED] 25X1  
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7. We are continuing to monitor closely all Soviet merchant ships that transit the Bosphorus, and overfly any carrying aircraft crates that crosses the Atlantic. [REDACTED] 25X1  
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